CONFIDENCE
Additional Handout for Leadership Matters

Background

Confidence is a vital factor in leadership. Many leaders are driven inappropriately by a hidden lack of confidence. Use this handout to aid discussion in your peer cell.

Assess

On a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 = no confidence at all and 10 = totally confident, where would you place yourself?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

'Confidence is the sweet spot between arrogance and despair'.

Rosabeth Moss Kanter

'Imposter syndrome' is 'the suspicion that we are not as good as everyone says we are, that our successes may have been accidental, and that, consequently, we may not be entirely sure how to repeat them.'

Marcus Buckingham

Reflect

Why do you think some leaders have a low view of themselves?

'And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the beloved; with you I am well pleased"' (Mark 1:11).

'Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God…' (2 Corinthians 3:4).

Discuss

Our research shows us that the tendency to under-confidence is most common in women, and over-confidence is most common in men. Why might this be the case?

How can we as leaders have a right confidence in ourselves as people God has called to leadership?

Biblical Self-Esteem

Taken from The Dilemma of Self-Esteem: The Cross and Christian Confidence, Joanna and Alister McGrath, Crossway

Christian self-esteem should be grounded in our attachment to God through Christ. This contrasts with some secular approaches to self-esteem.

- **Cognitive Behaviour Therapy** Looking outwards towards achievements and successes and the way in which events are appraised.
- **Client-Centred Psychotherapy** Looking inwards towards ourselves, stripped of spurious external assessments.
- **Christianity** Looking upwards towards God and the risen Christ.

Paul's letter to the Philippians can be seen as an extended commentary on Christian self-esteem.

- **'To all the saints in Christ Jesus' (1:1)** Our confidence rests in God's faithfulness to his promises.
- **Imprisonment for Christ (1:13)** It is not our situation which determines our self-esteem; it is what we allow God to do through it.
- **'I will continue to rejoice' (1:19)** Christian faith means a sure and firm confidence that, whatever happens, God will be able to use us. Self-devaluation is one of the most effective ways of preventing God doing anything through us. Insisting we are of no value is not false modesty, it is an insult to God.
- **'In humility count others better than yourselves' (2:3)** The essence of humility does not lie in self-deprecation or devaluation, but in positive evaluation of others. Humility is not about lowering our view of ourselves, but raising our view of others.
- **'...even death on a cross' (2:8)** Christ deems us worth saving. By becoming like us, he has brought new dignity to human nature. By humbling Himself, Christ has raised us up.
- **'If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more...' (3:4)** Christian self-esteem is not based on any national privilege, family entitlement, personal accomplishment. It is based solely on what God has done for us in Jesus Christ.
- **Resting our self-esteem in God leads to peace and rejoicing** 'Rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say rejoice' (4:4); 'Do not worry about anything...' (4:6).
- **'I can do all things in him who strengthens me' (4:13)** Paul felt able to boast of his weaknesses (2 Corinthians 12), knowing that the power of Christ might rest upon him.
- **'I have learned, in whatever state, to be content.' (4:11)** Paul can be content in all circumstances by refusing to base his self-esteem upon any circumstance.

For Reflection

How is your self–esteem? Where are its roots?

How will you grow in godly self-esteem?

'The Enemy's strategy... is to kill [human's] animal self-love as soon as possible; but it is his long-term policy, I fear, to restore to them a new kind of self-love – a charity and gratitude for all selves, including their own. For we must never forget what is the most repellent and inexplicable trait in our Enemy: he really loves the hairless bipeds he has created, and always gives back to them with his right hand what he has taken away with his left.'

CS Lewis, The Screwtape Letters

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